

Passage of Act Ensures Lower Energy Bills in Rural Communities

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Harry Teague voted to spur clean energy job growth in rural communities and lower energy costs for New Mexico families. Known as the Rural Energy Savings Act or “Rural Star” for short, the bill works to create manufacturing and installation jobs here at home by providing loans to American families and farmers that enable them to invest in home improvements to increase their own energy efficiency.

“Today’s vote helps move us toward my Do it all and Do it in New Mexico energy approach, by providing families and farmers across southern New Mexico with the tools they need to make their homes and farms more energy efficient and creating jobs in the process,” said Harry Teague. “The Rural Energy Savings Act will give many homeowners the opportunity to lower their bills through the installation of these energy upgrades, encourage American manufacturing by making sure that the materials used are American-made, and create jobs by ensuring that the labor used to install these energy upgrades can’t be outsourced to foreign countries.”

The programs included in the Rural Star Act will offer homeowners loans of between \$3,000 and \$7,500 to eliminate the upfront cost of home energy upgrades, which customers will then repay over 10 years on their electric bill – with the money saved through these improvements covering most of the cost of the loan. In addition, provisions of the bill will boost demand for energy efficient products, materials, and construction and installation services that are made in America, as over 90% of the materials used in the renovation process – caulking, insulation, HVAC systems, hot water heaters, sealant, windows, doors, and other structural materials – are produced domestically.

The legislation, which will help lower utility bills throughout rural communities, received support from rural utility groups across New Mexico.

“Electric co-ops have been leaders in energy efficiency in rural New Mexico for years and the Rural Energy Savings Act will allow co-op member consumers to lower their energy bills. The “RuralStar” bill is a commonsense tool for New Mexico’s electric co-ops that allows customers to improve energy efficiency,” said Keven Groenewold, Executive Vice President and General Manager of New Mexico Rural Electric Cooperatives. “We worked very closely with Congressman Teague and his office and appreciate his support for this bill that will make a big difference in rural New Mexico.”

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